

REMARKS

This Amendment is being filed in response to the Office Action mailed March 18, 2009, which has been reviewed and carefully considered. Reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the amendments made above and the remarks to follow are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-2, 6-18, 20-25, 27-40, 48-49 and 51 remain in this application, where claims 3-5, 19, 26, 41-47 and 50 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 1, 11, 13, 16, 17, 20, 27, 32, 35, 37, 38 and 48 are independent.

By means of the present amendment, claims 1-2, 6-18, 20-25, 27-40, 48-49 and 51 have been amended for non-statutory reasons, such as for better form including beginning the dependent claims with 'The' instead of 'A', and deleting reference numerals typically used in European practice that are known to not limit the scope of the claims. Such amendments to claims 1-2, 6-18, 20-25, 27-40, 48-49 and 51 were not made in order to address issues of patentability and Applicants respectfully reserve all rights under

the Doctrine of Equivalents.


In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claims 38-40 are allowed and that claims 5, 9, 11, 13, 16-18 20, 27, 32, 35-37, 50 and 51 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication that claims 38-40 are allowed and that claims 5, 9, 11, 13, 16-18 20, 27, 32, 35-37, 50 and 51 contain patentable subject matter. By means of the present amendment, independent claims 1 and 48 have been amended to include the features of allowable claims 5 and 50, respectively, which have been canceled without prejudice.

Further, claims 11, 13, 16, 17, 20, 27, 32, 35, 37, and 38 have been rewritten in independent form without including certain features that are believed to be not necessary for patentability. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that independent claims 11, 13, 16, 17, 20, 27, 32, 35, 37 and 38 be allowed. In addition, it is respectfully requested that claims 2, 6-10, 12, 14, 18-19, 21-25, 28-31, 33-36, 39-40, 49 and 51 also be allowed at least based on their dependence from independent claims 1, 17, 20, 35, 38 and 48 as well as their individually patentable elements.

In addition, Applicants deny any statement, position or averment of the Examiner that is not specifically addressed by the foregoing argument and response. Any rejections and/or points of argument not addressed would appear to be moot in view of the presented remarks. However, the Applicants reserve the right to submit further arguments in support of the above stated position, should that become necessary. No arguments are waived and none of the Examiner's statements are conceded.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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